

STATE OF IOWA
DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
UTILITIES BOARD

IN RE: INTERSTATE POWER COMPANY	DOCKET NOS. 199 IAC 19.4(15)"h"(3) 199 IAC 20.4(15)"h"(3)
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ORDER APPROVING, WITH MODIFICATION, CUSTOMER RIGHTS FORMS

(Issued February 8, 2000)

On November 12, 1999, Interstate Power Company (Interstate) filed with the Utilities Board (Board) proposed revisions to its electric and gas "Customer Rights and Remedies to Avoid Disconnection" forms required by 199 IAC 19.4(15)"h"(3) and 20.4(15)"h"(3). Most of the changes update phone numbers and provide additional clarification. However, Interstate also proposes to change the standard language applicable to disconnection and reconnection and replace it with the following: "The disconnection of a residential customer may not take place on a weekend, a holiday or after 2 p.m., unless the utility is prepared to reconnect the same day. . ." The standard language from the forms in the rules reads "[d]isconnection may not take place unless we are prepared to reconnect your service that same day if payment or other arrangements are made." The rules provide that if nonstandard language is used, the Board must approve it.

The Board approved an identical modification of the standard language for IES Utilities Inc. by order issued August 2, 1999, in Docket Nos. TF-99-285 and TF-99-286 because the non-standard language is consistent with 199 IAC

19.4(15)"i"(2) and 20.4(15)"i"(2). These rules provide that disconnection cannot take place on a "weekend, holiday or after 2 p.m., unless the utility is prepared to reconnect the same day, . . ." The Board noted that the nonstandard language used by IES emphasizes language contained in the rules that disconnection cannot take place on weekends, holidays, or after 2 p.m. unless the utility is prepared to reconnect the same day. The Board said this language provides useful information because it emphasizes that reconnection is available even if disconnection occurs late in the day or on a holiday or weekend. The Board specifically noted in the order "that pursuant to Board rules and practice, a utility must be prepared to reconnect on the day of disconnection regardless of the time of day the disconnection occurs."

After reviewing Interstate's filing, the Board now believes the language in the two sets of rules is confusing. The rules and practice are simple: disconnection cannot occur unless the utility is prepared to reconnect the same day. The language emphasizing holidays, weekends, and after 2 p.m. may provide useful information to some customers but is likely confusing to most. The language could cause customers to believe same day reconnection is not available at other times. This is not the case. The Board will therefore approve Interstate's changes to the standard form to update phone numbers and provide additional clarification, but it will direct Interstate to use the standard form language regarding disconnection. The Board intends to commence a rule making to harmonize the language in 199 IAC 19.4(15)"i"(2) and 20.4(15)"i"(2) with the language contained in the standard customer notice forms.

IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED:

The customer rights and remedies form filed by Interstate Power Company on November 12, 1999, is approved, subject to the modification discussed in this order.

UTILITIES BOARD

/s/ Allan T. Thoms

/s/ Susan J. Frye

ATTEST:

/s/ Raymond K. Vawter, Jr.
Executive Secretary

/s/ Diane Munns

Dated at Des Moines, Iowa, this 8th day of February, 2000.